

February 5, 2020

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED BY HENRY R MUÑOZ III
Chairman of the National Museum of the American Latino Commission

"TO ILLUMINATE THE AMERICAN STORY FOR ALL"

My name is Henry R. Muñoz III and it is an honor to be here today to provide testimony regarding the many decades of work, held aloft by so many people, across this country: scholars, curators, historians, scientists, teachers, artists, activists, business people, volunteers and every day citizens, to answer the question of whether there should be a National Museum of the American Latino in our Nation's Capital. I am one of them, not just as Chairman of the National Museum of the American Latino Commission, but as the first Latino in the 173 year history of the Smithsonian to serve a term on its National Board, as Vice Chairman of the National Board, as Chairman Emeritus of the Smithsonian National Latino Board and as a person who has spent his entire life devoted to the creation of places across the United States that reflect the rich contributions of Latinos to every aspect of American History, Culture, Art and Science.

Our commission, after working for almost two years found the answer to be abundantly clear. Yes. The time has come for the creation of this place on the National Mall, where our most important monuments are located, where we conduct the business of our congress, pay tribute to our veterans, gather to inaugurate our Presidents and where we give full voice to our freedom of speech. The Mall, more than any other public space in our country should tell the story of America, recognizing that Latinos were here well before 1776 and that in this new century, our future is increasingly Latino, more than fifty million people and growing.

We believe strongly that this new museum should be a part of our nation's preeminent scientific, research and cultural institution, The Smithsonian Institution and when created, should be known as The Smithsonian American Latino Museum, free to every American citizen and governed in the same manner as The National Museum of The American Indian and The National Museum of African American History and Culture. A place that within the vision of the Smithsonian, "for the increase and diffusion of knowledge" is not just a monument to past accomplishments, but a twenty first century learning laboratory, connected to cultural centers and schools across the country, recognizing that many American children may not visit Washington D.C. and yet deserve to have access to great American stories.

This is possible because of the work to create and the funding of programs, exhibitions and curatorial positions established throughout the Smithsonian Museum System over the last thirty years at The American History Museum, The American Art Museum, The National Portrait Gallery, The Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum and The Natural History Museum and this is just the beginning. These efforts will soon be joined by a privately funded Molina Family Latino Gallery within the walls of our American History Museum and accessible to all, on the Smithsonian's Latino Virtual Museum.

The National Museum of the American Latino Commission responded to the direction of this Congress embodied in Public Law 110-229 (S.2739). To engage the American people in order to create a strategic plan for the establishment and maintenance of this museum. To develop a fundraising strategy to support the museum. To report on the availability and cost of collections to be acquired. To examine the impact of this museum on regional Latino museums. To analyze and recommend possible locations for the museum. To recommend whether the museum should be located within the Smithsonian Institution. To recommend a governance and organizational structure for the museum. To engage the American Latino community in the development of the museum. To determine the cost of constructing, operating, and maintaining the museum. And finally, to assist in drafting legislation to carry out the plan of action to create and construct this museum.

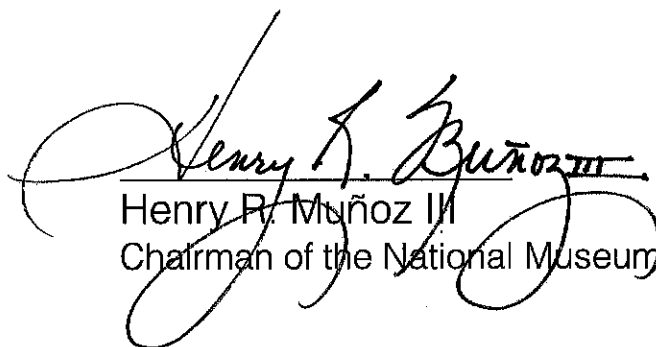
In May of 2011, in a ceremony at the White House, the members of the Commission, ahead of schedule and under budget, delivered to the President of the United States and to the Congress, a final report containing its in-depth analysis, findings and recommendations. Based upon its work with a broad group of thought leaders and experts, and most importantly, a dialogue with hundreds of thousands of citizens in communities throughout the United States both in person, and on line, a first of its kind effort, the commission articulated a comprehensive plan for the establishment of the Smithsonian American Latino Museum.

I have attached an Executive Summary of the Commission's Final Report for your record and I am happy to report that the findings validate the readiness of this idea to be formalized by Congress. It is completely within the capabilities of The Smithsonian Institution and this young, dynamic, fast growing, and economically significant population of Americans to give birth to and to sustain a new National Museum.

At this moment in our country's history when cultural understanding could not be more essential to the enduring strength of our democracy, I am asking on behalf of the American People to carefully consider the importance of creating The Smithsonian American Latino Museum, "To Illuminate The American Story for All."

I am happy to answer any questions you may have about the incredible work to bring this American Dream into reality.

E PLURIBUS UNUM

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Henry R. Muñoz III". The signature is written over a horizontal line.

Henry R. Muñoz III

Chairman of the National Museum of the American Latino Commission

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Final Report on the Potential Creation of the National Museum of the American Latino (henceforth “Report” or “Report to Congress”) is submitted to the 112th U.S. Congress by the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of the American Latino (the “Commission”). This Final Report provides an in-depth analysis and recommendations based on the Commission’s findings following outreach to communities throughout the United States.

American Latinos are inextricably woven into the fabric of the United States and have contributed enormously to the development of our great nation. For the benefit of all Americans, and to ensure our country’s future vitality, there is a compelling need to better tell this story. Through an exhaustive process, the Commission has determined that a national museum focused on American Latino history, art, and culture is not only viable but essential to America’s interests. This executive summary synthesizes the findings and recommendations of the Commission, and the full report provides the details and background needed to bolster these conclusions.

COMMISSION’S WORK PROCESS

The legislation to establish the Commission was enacted on May 8, 2008, as Public Law 110-229, 122 Stat 754. The Commission consists of 23 members appointed by the President, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, the Majority Leader of the Senate, and the Minority Leader of the Senate.

The Commission members were chosen based on qualifications in museum administration, expertise in fundraising, experience in public service, and demonstrated commitment to the research, study, or promotion of American Latino life, art, history, or culture.

The legislation contains specific direction for the Commission to

- submit a report to the President and Congress containing recommendations with respect to a plan of action for establishing and maintaining an American Latino museum in Washington DC
- develop a fundraising strategy
- draft legislation to carry out a plan of action to create and construct the museum

The Commission was given two years to conduct its work and submit a report. The Commission prepared this Final Report containing the technical information needed to provide Congress with a foundation for making a decision. This Final Report delivers critical information in a timely manner to expedite the decision making process.

To date, the Commission has met as a whole eight times. The Commission held its first meeting on September 18, 2009, at which time it chose its leadership and organizational structure to accomplish the tasks directed by Congress. A chairman and two vice chairpersons were selected. The following six committees were formed to organize the functions of the Commission:

- Public Communications
- Fundraising
- Vision, Mission, and Programs
- Governance
- Site Assessment
- Procurement

This Final Report to Congress is the document that responds to that legislative direction. The legislation further requires that the report address seven issues.

LEGISLATIVE ISSUE FROM PUBLIC LAW 110-229	CHAPTER IN THIS REPORT WHERE THE ISSUE IS ADDRESSED
1. The availability and cost of collections to be acquired and housed in the museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collections and Programs
2. The impact of the museum on regional Hispanic- and Latino-related museums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collections and Programs • Fundraising Plan • Public Outreach
3. Possible locations for the museum in Washington DC and its environs, to be considered in consultation with the National Capital Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts, the Department of the Interior, and Smithsonian Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Assessment: Locations and Facilities
4. Whether the museum should be located within the Smithsonian Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Assessment: Locations and Facilities • Fundraising Plan • Public Outreach
5. The governance and organizational structure from which the museum should operate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance and Organizational Structure
6. How to engage the American Latino community in the development and design of the museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Outreach • Plan for Public Engagement upon Passage of Legislation
7. The cost of constructing, operating, and maintaining the museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site Assessment: Locations and Facilities • Capital and Operating Budget • Fundraising Plan

The Commission selected the National Park Service Denver Service Center to perform project management and contracting services. Through a competitive federal government contracting process, five firms and their subcontractors were selected to conduct the work of the Commission along the lines of the committee assignments.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The legislation allowed the Commission to convene a national conference on the American Latino museum. However, in lieu of convening a national conference, the Commission chose to engage the American public in a dialogue about a potential museum through a series of public forums and informational meetings.

The Commission met and engaged communities throughout the country in a dialogue about an American Latino museum. Small groups of Commissioners travelled to cities around the country to gather information from community leaders and the general public; the cities were Washington DC; Chicago, Illinois; Santa Fe/Albuquerque, New Mexico; Austin, Texas; Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota; Los Angeles, California; Miami, Florida; New York, New York; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and San Francisco, California.

The main purpose of the public forums, beyond generating awareness, was to gather feedback from the general public. The statements that resonated most clearly throughout the forums, were—

- *Latinos are part of the fabric of this nation*
- *There is an urgency, desire, and need for a museum to highlight and preserve this great heritage for the benefit of all Americans.*

The Commission's efforts were also represented at many conferences of national organizations; specifically, the American Association of Museums, National Association of Latino Arts and Culture, National Association of Hispanic Journalists, National Association of Latino Elected Officials, National Council of La Raza, the Association of Hispanic Advertising Agencies, the Cuban American Council, the National Leadership Institute, and the League of United Latin American Citizens. Many have expressed their desire for an American Latino museum in Washington DC through official letters.

The Commission expanded its public outreach efforts with a website, and an active presence on a variety of social media sites. The Commission's work also received substantial media coverage in English and Spanish throughout the country, generating millions of media impressions.

In addition, contractors representing the Commission visited and interviewed scores of museum professionals, business leaders, and others as part of their research.

COMMISSION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the subject of Governance and Organizational Structure, the Commission submits the following:

- The Commission recommends that Congress establish within the Smithsonian Institution a museum to be known as the Smithsonian American Latino Museum.
- The Smithsonian American Latino Museum will be established within the Smithsonian Institution for the collection, study, and establishment of programs relating to American Latino life, art, history, and culture.
- A museum board of trustees, with designated duties, powers, and authorities, will be established within the Smithsonian Institution.

On the subject of Collections and Programs, the Commission submits the following:

- The Smithsonian American Latino Museum will be unprecedented in the Smithsonian system. The museum will serve as a gateway to the National Mall and integrate its programs, training, and research into the Smithsonian family of museums.
- The Smithsonian American Latino Museum will be created as a destination site on the National Mall that will enhance the visitor's Washington DC experience.
- The museum will be a collecting institution that retrieves, records, preserves, and shares the multifaceted material, culture, and intellectual capital of this country.
- The museum will have a strong education and public program emphasis and serve as a place of ongoing cultural dialogue.
- The museum will advance research and scholarship to augment higher learning and, ultimately, benefit the American people.
- Existing institutions are enthusiastic about collaboration with the Smithsonian American Latino Museum, with enhanced opportunities in collections,

exhibition development, programming, research, and training.

- The creation of the Smithsonian American Latino Museum will stimulate an environment of collaboration among American Latino cultural institutions and centers, and a new cultural ecology could be fostered that ultimately promotes greater cultural awareness and understanding.
- The museum will establish a grant program in consultation with the Institute of Museum and Library Services with the purpose of improving operations, care of collections, and development of professional management at American Latino museums across the nation.

On the subject of possible locations, the Commission submits the following:

- The Commission recommends Congress designate the Capitol Site as the site for the museum.
- The Capitol Site has the potential to serve as the pedestrian gateway between Washington DC and the National Mall, more specifically, the pedestrian and vehicular traffic from Union Station and along First Street and Third Street. This site is arguably the most significant open site remaining in the Capitol grounds. The site, surrounded by parks and wide avenues, is flat, open, and highly visible from all directions. In addition, the Capitol Site is located in an extremely desirable location facing the Capitol on the National Mall at the head of Pennsylvania Avenue, which offers easy access to public transit. The Capitol Site could accommodate a building of approximately 252,000 square feet. Other required space needs for the museum could be accommodated in off-site facilities.
- In the course of the Commission's consultation process, the National Capital Planning Commission provided a statement endorsing the Capitol Site as an appropriate site for the museum.

On the subject of Fundraising, the Commission submits the following:

- The Commission found that no federal appropriation would be necessary for the first six years upon establishment of the museum. Private donations could sufficiently fund the initial years of planning and organization that are required in the pre-design, pre-construction phase of such a project.
- The Commission has determined that a private fundraising goal of \$300 million, based on an overall \$600 million total cost figure, with a 50-50 split between private donations and congressional appropriations is achievable over a 10-year span. To achieve this goal, the museum will require an aggressive and comprehensive public awareness campaign to secure the estimated \$300 million from private sources. The 50-50 private-public split and the public awareness campaign are key elements that will increase the likelihood of success. To meet the \$300 million private-sector fundraising campaign goal from the private sector, the budget for fundraising expenses is approximately \$75 million. The campaign would last up to 10 years, with full implementation beginning in 2012. The 10-year duration is based on the experience of the National Museum of the American Indian and National Museum of African American History and Culture, which indicates the importance of a longer period to ramp-up fundraising. The most significant expense will be personnel, both the front line fundraisers and the support infrastructure necessary for their success.

The Commission has determined there is a need for a new national museum in Washington DC that is devoted to the preservation, presentation, and interpretation of American Latino art, cultural expressions, and experiences; a museum that “illuminates the American story for the benefit of all.”

The Commission, in recommending that the nation move forward with the goal of establishing a new national museum, recognizes that it must balance two vital priorities: not contributing to any new federal expenditure in the short term, while clearly moving

forward with a national museum that integrates the Latino experience into the American narrative.

This study has discovered a large constituency of private corporations, foundations and individuals that are eager to support a museum that will tell the story of the American Latino. The Commission believes that much of the facility planning and initial programming of the museum, during its first six years, can be fully supported with nonfederal funds.

This Report to Congress defines the purposes and scope of the American Latino museum. More comprehensive reports in the areas of fundraising, public outreach, governance, collections and programs, and site assessment are available and will provide a foundation for the more detailed planning and implementation work that lies ahead.

The Commission respectfully submits this Report to the President and Congress of the United States.

SUMMARY OF RATIONALE FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

LATINOS ARE WOVEN INTO THE FABRIC OF AMERICA

Latinos are an integral part of the history and culture of the United States. The American Latino story has been evolving for more than 500 years. Nevertheless, some Americans, including American Latinos, know little of our country's rich Latino heritage. Written and oral narratives have not become part of the collective memory of our country. These stories have been untold, under told, or altogether forgotten.

All people of the United States contribute to the American identity. The telling of the Latino story in America recognizes a culture that represents a vital national asset. It is also an opportunity for a more complete telling of the complex American story. The Commission established to study the potential creation of an American Latino museum chose as a mission statement — *To Illuminate the American Story for the Benefit of All*.

The statement acknowledges that an American Latino museum in our nation's capital would serve not only the Latino public, but also the larger American public and international visitors, helping them to better understand and appreciate the compelling American narrative. The American values of faith, family, hope, patriotism, persistence, resilience, community, civic participation, and work ethic strongly resonate within the American Latino story.

LATINOS: A SEGMENT OF SOCIETY VITAL TO AMERICA'S FUTURE

POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

Latinos became the largest ethnic group in the United States in 2008 with a population of over 52 million, including the 4 million American citizens residing in Puerto Rico, constituting over 16 percent of the total U.S. population. The Latino population of the United States is projected to be 132 million in 2050, when it will constitute 30 percent of the nation's total population.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2009 there were 21 states in which Latinos were the largest minority group. These states were Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and Wyoming.

In 2009, 62 percent of Latinos 25 and older had at least a high school education; 13 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher; and 935,000 had advanced degrees (master's, professional, doctorate). In addition, 79,440 Latinos were chief executives; 50,866 were physicians and surgeons; 48,720 were post-secondary teachers; 38,532 were lawyers; and 2,726 were news analysts, reporters, and correspondents.

A record number — 9.7 million Latino citizens — reported voting in the 2008 presidential election, about 2 million more than voted in 2004. More than 1 million Hispanics or Latinos 18 years and older are veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Today, with 22 percent of the nation's children living in a Latino household, this group will play a vital role in renewing the American dream, giving it new cultural options. In all their diversity, American Latinos are keeping and enhancing fundamental American ideals and values.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF LATINOS IN EVERY ASPECT OF AMERICAN SOCIETY

ECONOMICS

American Latinos increasingly contribute, in a very significant way, to the development of the U.S. economy. The buying power of the Latino market in 2009 was \$978 billion – larger than the entire economies (2008 Gross Domestic Product measured in U.S. dollars) of all but 14 countries in the world. The Selig Center for Economic Growth report on The Multicultural Economy estimates that Latino buying power in 2013 will be \$1.3 trillion.

The growth of Latino purchasing power is a significant and growing asset of the U.S. economy. Between 1990 and 2008, the buying power of Latinos increased by 349 percent – a percentage gain that surpassed both the 141 percent increase in non-Latino buying power and the 151 percent increase in the buying power of all consumers.

According to the Selig Center, the 10 states with the largest Latino markets in 2008 were, in order, California (\$249 billion); Texas (\$171 billion); Florida (\$101 billion); New York (\$75 billion); Illinois (\$41 billion); New Jersey (\$36 billion); Arizona (\$31 billion); Colorado (\$21 billion); New Mexico (\$18 billion); and Georgia (\$15 billion).

The top 10 states, as ranked by the rate of growth of Latino buying power between 1990 and 2008 are Arkansas (1,563 percent); North Carolina (1,314 percent); Tennessee (1,053 percent); Georgia (1,037 percent); Nevada (965 percent); Alabama (890 percent); South Carolina (797 percent); Minnesota (768 percent); South Dakota (768 percent); and North Dakota (755 percent).

Latino business owners are another potent economic force. Census Bureau data from 2007 showed there were 2.3 million Latino-owned businesses, up 43.6 percent from 2002.

HISTORIC CONTRIBUTIONS

American Latinos have contributed significantly in many aspects of American history and culture.

American Latinos celebrate their indigenous, Iberian, African, and Asian roots. The Spanish were the first Europeans to interact with the indigenous people in what is now the United States. Juan Ponce de León arrived in 1513 in what is now Florida, after first landing and becoming the first Governor of Puerto Rico. The Spanish then founded Saint Augustine, Florida, in 1565 – 42 years before the establishment of Jamestown. From 1540 to 1542, an expedition led by Francisco Vázquez de Coronado explored modern-day New Mexico and Arizona, eventually travelling as far north as Kansas – 264 years before the Lewis and Clark Expedition. These early expeditions led to permanent Spanish outposts throughout North America, to the founding of cities like Santa Fe and San Francisco (then named Yerba Buena), and to the naming of hundreds of U.S. rivers, mountains, towns, and even several states.

LATINOS HAVE MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE FOR THE UNITED STATES

The patriotism of American Latinos cannot be questioned. Millions of Latinos have met the challenge of serving the nation in war and in peace. In times of war, in every battle, on every battlefield, Latinos have put their lives on the line to protect American freedoms.

Latinos have made the ultimate sacrifice of dying for their country. Marine Lance Corporal José Gutiérrez was the first combat casualty in the war in Iraq. Gutiérrez, born in Guatemala, was a permanent resident of the United States and left college to join the military. A friend said of Gutiérrez, "He wanted to give to the United States what the United States gave to him. He came with nothing. This country gave him everything." About half a million Latinos served in World War II; 12 were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Nearly 150,000 Latinos served in the Korean Conflict, and nine were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Latinos have served in the U.S. Armed Forces in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam War, and in the Middle East wars. Over 25 percent of the 58,195 names on the Vietnam War Memorial are Hispanic.

Latinos are also making a significant contribution at the highest levels of the U.S. military. In 1964 Admiral Horacio Rivero, a Puerto Rican, became the Navy's first Latino four-star admiral. General Richard E. Cavazos, a Mexican-American, became the Army's first Hispanic four-star general in 1982. He served with the 65th Infantry Regiment during the Korean War, earning a Distinguished Service Cross in 1953. In 1998 Louis Caldera, a Mexican-American and West Point graduate, became the highest-ranking Latino to hold office in America when he became Secretary of the Army. Until 2004, Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez held the top military position in Iraq as Commander of Coalition Ground Forces. His tenure was during what was, arguably, one of the most critical periods of the war. Highlights during his term as commander include the capture of Saddam Hussein.

Similar stories have been repeated throughout American history. Bernardo de Gálvez, military commander of Spanish forces in the Caribbean and governor of Louisiana, with contingents from Spain, Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the Santo Domingo, captured the British stronghold of Pensacola, Florida. This action subsequently enabled George Washington's forces to launch his campaign on Yorktown.

The Battle of Yorktown, the decisive battle of the Revolutionary War, was in great part financed by the people of Cuba. America's first Admiral, David Farragut, son of Spaniard Jorge Farragut, also a U.S. military veteran, led the naval forces for the Union during the Civil War. Farragut is famous for the inspirational line, "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead."

Puerto Ricans have participated in numerous military conflicts. Puerto Rican troops have been honored as among the most valorous in American military history. The 65th Infantry Regiment, also known as "The Borinqueneers," was originally activated as the "Porto Rico Regiment" in 1899. A 65th Infantry officer ordered, and a 65th Infantry Sergeant fired, the United States' first shots of World War I. The Regiment was also involved in active combat during World War II. During the Korean War, this unit suffered the most casualties. For their

bravery and military strength, "The Borinqueneers" garnered 5 Distinguished Services Crosses, 258 Silver Stars, 606 Bronze Stars, and 90 Purple Hearts. Furthermore, Major General Juan César Cordero Dávila was the commanding officer of the 65th Infantry Regiment during the Korean War, rising to become one of the highest-ranking Latino officers in the United States Army.

American Latinos have also made significant contributions as members of Congress, state legislators, mayors, commissioners, and councilmen and women and as public administrators at the federal, state, and municipal levels

CULTURAL, ARTISTIC, AND INTELLECTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF U.S. LATINOS

In spite of their essential relevance to our country's intellectual and cultural life, a 1994 task force report to the Smithsonian Institution found that "U.S. Hispanics are the only major contributor to American civilization still uncelebrated by any specific, systemic, permanent effort in this country's major cultural institution." Since the 1994 report, major efforts within the Smithsonian Institution have been undertaken, but a richer and more inclusive American story is yet to be told.

The contributions of Latinos in American civic life, fine arts, culinary arts, music, sports, entertainment, business, and other areas of public life are significant. The fulfillment of the American dream is embodied in the deeds of generations of American Latinos who have proudly celebrated their "Americanism" with fellow citizens and residents of this nation.

The new narrative of contemporary America must include the stories of the people working the fields and gathering the crops for the American dinner table; the efforts of the people building and maintaining the nation's infrastructure; and the telling of American Latino successes in higher education, business, the arts, humanities, sports, government, and entertainment.

The outstanding paintings, sculptures, installations, performance art, films and theatre created by American Latino artists would constitute a major attraction for visitors to an American Latino museum in Washington DC. Among the countless possible stories and cultural artifacts, the museum could display and interpret the small bedroom in which César Chávez endured the 25-day hunger strike, “a fast for nonviolence and a call to sacrifice,” to draw attention to the plight of farm workers and the need for social justice and respect for human dignity. Visitors could listen to the master digital recordings of the dozens of American Latino music artists who performed “We Are the World en Español” for the 2010 Haiti earthquake relief effort, see the costumes of their favorite stars, and sing their music in specially designed studios.

The deeds of humanitarians, like baseball Hall of Famer Roberto Clemente of Puerto Rico, could be highlighted to encourage young people toward a life of service. Museum visitors could also enjoy the excellence of Latino cuisine and be inspired by stories of leadership and public service. They could learn from the business success stories, such as those of Cuban-Americans Desi Arnaz, who pioneered TV studio filming techniques; and Roberto Goizueta, who became worldwide chairman of Coca-Cola. In sum, the vibrancy of the American Latino experience, in all its manifestations, could be presented to show the great range of the human spirit and imagination.

CONCLUSION

The Congress of the United States acknowledged the magnitude of contributions by the American Latino community when it established the Commission. The Commission engaged the public throughout the country in a dynamic dialogue about the idea of such a national museum. The museum that is envisioned and outlined in this report would be located in Washington DC, among the treasury of museums that represent American history, culture, and achievement. The benefits of the museum would also extend to and derive from local communities, Latino museums, cultural centers, and educational institutions across the land to make this museum national in operational scope, as well as in its place of prominence in the nation’s capital.

As the full report illustrates, the United States of America would not have achieved the power, prominence, and greatness it enjoys today without the immense contributions of American Latinos throughout its history. One could not imagine today’s American society without the richness of Latino culture. All Americans benefit from a deeper and fuller understanding of the vital part American Latinos have played in our nation’s history and their essential role in shaping our future.

It is for these reasons the Commission strongly recommends the establishment of a National Museum of the American Latino that **“illuminates the American story for the benefit of all.”**